Mrs. Siddons as Andromache.

THE

DISTREST MOTHER.

A TRAGEDY.

WRITTEN BY

Mr. AMB. PHILIPS.

TAKEN FROM

THE MANAGER'S BOOK,

AT THE

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Bt Muirhead

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DRURY-LANE.

MEN.

Pyrrhus,	— —	Mr. Palmer.
Phœnix,	— —	Mr. Packer.
Oreſtes,	— —	Mr. Smith.
Pylades,	— —	Mr. Barrymore.

WOMEN.

Andromache,	—	Miſs Kemble.
Cephiſa,	— —	Miſs Tidſwell.
Hermione,	—	Mrs. Siddons.
Cleone,	— —	Miſs Collins.

Attendants on Pyrrhus and Oreſtes, &c.

The SCENE, a great hall in the court of Pyrrhus, at Buthrotos, the capital city of Epirus.

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ACT I. *Enter Oreſtes, Pylades, and attendants.*

Oreſ. O Pylades! what's life without a friend!
At ſight of thee my gloomy ſoul cheers up,
My hopes revive, and gladneſs dawns within me.
After an abſence of ſix tedious moons,
How could I hope to find my Pylades,
My joy, my comfort! on this fatal ſhore!
Even in the court of Pyrrhus? in theſe realms,
Theſe hated realms, ſo croſs to all my wiſhes,
O, my brave friend! may no blind ſtroke of fate
Divide us more, and tear me from myſelf.

Pyl. O prince! O my Oreſtes! O my friend!—
Thus let me ſpeak the welcome of my heart [*Embracing.*
Since I have gain'd this unexpected meeting,
Bleſt be the powers that barr'd my way to Greece,
And kept me here! ever ſince the unhappy day
When warring winds (Epirus full in view)
Sunder'd our barks on the loud ſtormy main.

Oreſ. It was, indeed, a morning full of horror!

Pyl. A thouſand boding cares have rack'd my ſoul
In your behalf. Often, with tears, I mourn'd
The fatal ills, to which your life's involv'd;
And grudg'd you dangers which I could not ſhare.
I fear'd to what extremities the black deſpair
That prey'd upon your mind, might have betray'd you,
And left the Gods, in pity to your woes,
Should hear your pray'rs, and take the life you loath'd.
But now with joy I ſee you!———The retinue,
And numerous followers that ſurround you here,
Speak better fortunes, and a mind diſpos'd
To reliſh life.

Oreſ. Alas! my friend, who knows
The deſtiny, to which I ſtand reſerv'd!
I come in ſearch of an inhuman fair;
And live or die, as ſhe decrees my fate.

Pyl. You much ſurpriſe me, prince!—I' thought you cur'd
Of your unpity'd unſucceſsful paſſion.
Why, in Epirus, ſhould you hope to find
Hermione leſs cruel, than at Sparta?
I thought her pride, and the diſdainful manner
In which ſhe treated all your conſtant ſufferings,
Had broke your fetters, and aſſur'd your freedom:
Aſham'd of your repulſe, and ſlighted vows,

You hated her; you talk'd of her no more:
Prince, you deceiv'd me.
Oreſ. I deceiv'd myſelf.
Do not upbraid the unhappy man that loves thee.
Thou know'ſt I never hid my paſſion from thee;
Thou ſaw'ſt it, in its birth, and in its progreſs;
And when, at laſt, the hoary king, her father,
Great Menelaus, gave away his daughter,
His lovely daughter, to the happy Pyrrhus,
Th' avenger of his wrongs, thou ſaw'ſt my grief,
My torture, my deſpair;
O Pylades! my heart has bled within me,
To ſee thee, preſt with ſorrows not thy own,
Still wadd'ring with me, like a baniſh'd man,
Watchful, and anxious for thy wretched friend,
To temper the wild tranſports of my mind,
And ſave me from myſelf.
Pyl. Why thus unkind?
Why will you envy me the pleaſing taſk
Of generous love, and ſympathizing friendſhip?
Oreſ. Thou miracle of truth!—But hear me on.
When in the midſt of my diſaſtrous fate,
I thought how the divine Hermione,
Deaf to the vows, regardleſs of my plaints,
Gave up herſelf, and all her charms, to Pyrrhus;
Thou may'ſt remember, I abhorr'd her name,
Strove to forget her, and repay her ſcorn.
I made my friends, and even myſelf, believe
My ſoul was freed. Alas! I did not ſee,
That all the malice of my heart was love.
Triumphing thus, and yet a captive ſtill,
In Greece I landed, and in Greece I found
The aſſembled princes all alarm'd with fears,
In which their common ſafety ſeem'd concern'd.
I join'd them: for I hop'd that war and glory
Might fill my mind, and take up all my thoughts:
And that my ſhatter'd ſoul, impair'd with grief,
Once more would reaſſume its wonted vigour,
And every idle paſſion quit my breaſt.
Pyl. The thought was worthy Agamemnon's ſon.
Oreſ. But ſee the ſtrange perverſeneſs of my ſtars,
Which throws me on the rock I ſtrove to ſhun!
The jealous chiefs, and all the ſtates of Greece,
With one united voice complain of Pyrrhus;
That now, forgetful of the promiſe giv'n,

And mindleſs of his godlike father's fate,
Aſtyanax he nurſes in his court;
Aſtyanax, the young, ſurviving hope
Of ruin'd Troy; Aſtyanax, deſcended
From a long race of kings——great Hector's ſon.
Pyl. A name ſtill dreadful in the ears of Greece!
But, prince, you'll ceaſe to wonder, why the child
Lives thus protected in the court of Pyrrhus,
When you ſhall hear, the bright Andromache,
His lovely captive, charms him from his purpoſe:
The mother's beauty guards the helpleſs ſon.
Oreſ. Your tale confirms what I have heard; and hence
Spring all my hopes. Since my proud rival wooes
Another partner to his throne and bed,
Hermione may ſtill be mine. Her father,
The injur'd Menelaus, thinks already
His daughter ſlighted, and th' intended nuptials
Too long delay'd. I heard his loud complaints
With ſecret pleaſure; and was glad to find
Th' ungrateful maid neglected in her turn,
And all my wrongs aveng'd in her diſgrace.
Pyl. Oh, may you keep your juſt reſentments warm!
Oreſ. Reſentments! O my friend, too ſoon I found
They grew not out of hatred. I am betray'd:
I practiſe on myſelf, and fondly plot
My own undoing. Goaded on by love,
I canvaſs'd all the ſuffrages of Greece;
And here I come, their ſworn ambaſſador,
To ſpeak their jealouſies, and claim this boy.
Pyl. Pyrrhus will treat your embaſſy with ſcorn,
Full of Achilles, his redoubted ſire;
Pyrrhus is proud, impetuous, headſtrong, fierce;
Made up of paſſions: will he then be ſway'd,
And give to death the ſon of her he loves?
Oreſ. Oh, would he render up Hermione,
And keep Aſtynax, I ſhould be bleſt!
He muſt; he ſhall: Hermione is my life,
My ſoul, my rapture!——I'll no longer curb
The ſtrong deſire that hurries me to madneſs:
I'll give a looſe to love; I'll bear her hence;
I'll tear her from his arms; I'll——O, ye Gods!
Give me Hermione, or let me die!—
But tell me, Pylades, how ſtand my hopes?
Is Pyrrhus ſtill enamour'd with her charms?
Or doſt thou think he'll yield me up the prize,

The dear, dear prize, which he has raviſh'd from me!
Pyl. I dare not flatter your fond hopes ſo far;
The King, indeed, cold to the Spartan princeſs,
Turns all his paſſion to Andromache,
Hector's afflicted widow. But in vain,
With interwoven love and rage, he ſues
The charming captive, obſtinately cruel.
Oft he alarms her for her child, confin'd
Apart; and when her tears begin to flow,
As ſoon he ſtops them, and recals his threats.
Hermione a thouſand times has ſeen
His ill-requited vows return to her;
And takes his indignation all for love.
What can be gather'd from a man ſo various?
He may, in the diſorder of his ſoul,
Wed her he hates, and puniſh her he loves.
Oreſ. But tell me, how the wrong'd Hermione
Brooks her ſlow nuptials, and diſhonour'd charms?
Pyl. Hermione would fain be thought to ſcorn
Her wavering lover, and diſdain his falſhood;
But, ſpite of all her pride and conſcious beauty,
She mours in ſecret her neglected charms,
And oft has made me privy to her tears;
Still threatens to be gone, yet ſtill ſhe ſtays,
And ſometimes ſighs, and wiſhes for Oreſtes.
Oreſ. Ah, were thoſe wiſhes from her heart, my friend,
I'd fly in tranſport—— [*Flouriſh within.*
Pyl. Hear!—The king approaches
To give you audience. Speak your embaſſy
Without reſerve: urge the demands of Greece;
And in the name of all her kings, require
That Hector's ſon be given into your hands.
Pyrrhus, inſtead of granting what they aſk,
To ſpeed his love and win the Trojan dame,
Will make it merit to preſerve her ſon.
But, ſee: he comes!
Oreſ. Meanwhile, my Pylades,
Go, and diſpoſe Hermoine to ſee
Her lover, who is come thus far, to throw
Himſelf, in all his ſorrows, at her feet. [*Exit Pylades.*

Enter Pyrrhus, Phœnix, and attendants.

Before I ſpeak the meſſage of the Greeks,
Permit me, ſir, to glory in the title
Of their ambaſſador; ſince I behold
Troy's vanquiſher, and great Achilles' ſon,

Nor

Nor does the ſon riſe ſhort of ſuch a father:
If Hector fell by him, Troy fell by you.
But what your father never would have done,
You do. You cheriſh the remains of Troy;
And, by an ill tim'd pity, keep alive
The dying embers of a ten year's war.
Have you ſo ſoon forgot the mighty Hector?
The Greeks remember his high-brandiſh'd ſword,
That fill'd their ſtate with widows and with orphans;
For which they call for vengeance on his ſon.
Who knows what he may one day prove? Who knows
But he may brave us in our ports, and, fill'd
With Hector's fury, ſet our fleets on blaze?
You may, yourſelf, live to repent your mercy.
Comply, then, with the Grecians' juſt demands;
Satiate their vengeance, and preſerve yourſelf.

Pyr. The Greeks are for my ſafety more concern'd
Than I deſire. I thought your kings were met
On more important counſel. When I heard
The name of their ambaſſador, I hop'd
Some glorious enterprize was taking birth.
Is Agamemnon's ſon diſpatch'd for this?
And do the Grecian chiefs, renown'd in war,
A race of heroes, join in cloſe debate,
To plot an infant's death?—What right has Greece
To aſk his life? Muſt I, muſt I alone,
Of all her ſcepter'd warriors, be deny'd
To treat my captive as I pleaſe? Know, prince,
When Troy lay ſmoking on the ground, and each
Proud victor ſhar'd the harveſt of the war,
Andromache, and this her ſon were mine;
Were mine by lot. And who ſhall reſt them from me?
Ulyſſes bore away old Priam's queen;
Caſſandra was your own great father's prize:
Did I concern myſelf in what they won?
Did I ſend embaſſies to claim their captives?

Oreſ. But, ſir, we fear for you, and for ourſelves.
Troy may again revive, and a new Hector
Riſe in Aſtyanax. Then think betimes ——

Pyr. Let daſtard ſouls be timorouſly wiſe:
But tell them, Pyrrhus knows not how to form
Far fancy'd ills, and dangers out of ſight.

Oreſ. Sir, call to mind the unrivall'd ſtrength of Troy,
Her walls, her bulwarks, and her gates of braſs;
Her kings, her heroes, and embattled armies!

Pyr. I call them all to mind; and see them all
Confus'd in dust; all mixt in one wide ruin;
All but a child, and he in bondage held.
What vengeance can we fear from such a Troy?
If they have sworn to extinguish Hector's race,
Why was their vow for twelve long months deferr'd?
Why was he not in Priam's bosom slain?
He should have fall'n among the slaughter'd heaps,
Whelm'd under Troy. His death had then been just.
My fury then was without bounds; but now,
My wrath appeas'd, must I be cruel still?
And, deaf to all the tender calls of pity,
Like a cool murderer, bathe my hands in blood?
An infant's blood?—No, prince—Go, bid the Greeks
Mark out some other victim; my revenge
Has had its fill. What has escap'd from Troy
Shall not be sav'd to perish in Epirus.

Oref. I need not tell you, sir, Astyanax
Was doom'd to death in Troy; nor mention how
The crafty mother sav'd her darling son.
The Greeks do now but urge their former sentence;
Nor is't the boy, but Hector they pursue:
The father draws their vengeance on the son—
The father, who so oft in Grecian blood
Has drench'd his sword—the father, whom the Greeks
May seek e'en here——Prevent them, sir, in time.

Pyr. No! let them come; since I was born to wage
Eternal wars. Let them now turn their arms
On him who conquer'd for them. Let them come,
And in Epirus seek another Troy.
'Twas thus they recompenc'd my godlike sire;
Thus was Achilles thank'd. But, prince, remember,
Their black ingratitude then cost them dear.

Oref. Shall Greece then find a rebel son in Pyrrhus?

Pyr. Have I then conquer'd to depend on Greece?

Oref. Hermoine will sway your soul to peace,
And mediate 'twixt her father and yourself.
Her beauty will enforce my embassy.

Pyr. Hermoine may have her charms, and I
May love her still, tho' not her father's slave.
I may, in time, give proofs that I'm a lover.
But never must forget that I'm a king.
Meanwhile, sir, you may see fair Helen's daughter:
I know how near in blood you stand ally'd.
That done, you have my answer, prince. The Greeks,

No

No doubt, expect your quick return.

[*Exeunt Orestes and attendants.*

Phœn. Sir, do you send your rival to the princess?

Pyr. I am told that he has lov'd her long.

Phœn. If so,
Have you not cause to fear the smother'd flame
May kindle at her sight, and blaze a-new;
And she be wrought to listen to his passion?

Pyr. Aye, let them, Phœnix, let them love their fill!
Let them go hence; let them depart together:
Together let them sail for Sparta; all my ports
Are open to them both. From what constraint,
What irksome thoughts, should I then be reliev'd!

Phœn. But, sir——

Pyr. I shall another time, good Phœnix,
Unbosom to thee all my thoughts—For see,
Andromache appears. [*Exit Phœnix.*

Enter Andromache and Cephisa.

May I, madam,
Flatter my hopes so far as to believe
You come to seek me here?

Andr. This way, sir, leads
To those apartments where you guard my son.
Since you permit me, once a-day, to visit
All I have left of Hector and of Troy,
I go to weep a few sad moments with him.
I have not yet to-day embrac'd my child;
I have not held him in my widow'd arms.

Pyr. Ah, madam! should the threats of Greece prevail,
You'll have occasion for your tears, indeed!

Andr. Alas! what threats? What can alarm the Greeks?
There are no Trojans left.

Pyr. Their hate to Hector
Can never die: the terror of his name
Still shakes their souls, and makes them dread his son.

Andr. A mighty honour for victorious Greece,
To fear an infant, a poor friendless child!
Who smiles in bondage, nor yet knows himself
The son of Hector, and the slave of Pyrrhus.

Pyr. Weak as he is, the Greeks demand his life,
And send no less than Agamemnon's son
To fetch him hence.

Andr. And, sir, do you comply
With such demands!——This blow is aim'd at me.
How should the child avenge his slaughter'd sire?

But, cruel men! they will not have him live
To cheer my heavy heart, and eaſe my bonds.
I promis'd to myſelf in him a ſon,
In him a friend, a huſband, and a father.
But I muſt ſuffer ſorrow heap'd on ſorrow,
And ſtill the fatal ſtroke muſt come from you.

Pyr. Dry up thoſe tears; I muſt not ſee you weep;
And know, I have rejected their demands.
The Greeks already threaten me with war;
But, ſhould they arm, as once they did, for Helen,
And hide the Adriatic with their fleets;
Should they prepare a ſecond ten-years ſiege,
And lay my towers and palaces in duſt;
I am determined to defend your ſon,
And rather die myſelf than give him up.
But, madam, in the midſt of all theſe dangers,
Will you refuſe me a propitious ſmile?
Hated of Greece, and preſt on every ſide,
Let me not, madam, while I fight your cauſe,
Let me not combat with your cruelties,
And count Andromache amongſt my foes.

Andr. Conſider, ſir, how this will ſound in Greece!
How can ſo great a ſoul betray ſuch weakneſs?
Let not men ſay ſo generous a deſign
Was but the tranſport of a heart in love.

Pyr. Your charms will juſtify me to the world.

Andr. How can Andromache, a captive queen,
O'erwhelm'd with grief, a burden to herſelf,
Harbour a thought of love? Alas! what charms
Have theſe unhappy eyes, by you condemn'd
To weep for ever ——Talk of it no more.——
To reverence the misfortunes of a foe;
To ſuccour the diſtreſt; to give the ſon
To an afflicted mother; to repel
Confederate nations, leagu'd againſt his life;
Unbrib'd by love, unterrify'd by threats,
To pity, to protect him: theſe are cares,
Theſe are exploits worthy Achilles's ſon.

Pyr. Will your reſentments, then, endure for ever!
Muſt Pyrrhus never be forgiven?——'Tis true,
My ſword has often reek'd in Phrygian blood,
And carry'd havoc thro' your royal kindred;
But you, fair princeſs, amply have aveng'd
Old Priam's vanquiſh'd houſe; and all the woes
I brought on them, fall ſhort of what I ſuffer.

We

We both have ſuffer'd in our turns, and now
Our common foes ſhall teach us to unite.
Andr. Where does the captive not behold a foe?
Pyr. Forget the term of hatred, and behold
A friend in Pyrrhus. Give me but to hope,
I'll free your ſon, I'll be a father to him;
Myſelf will teach him to avenge the Trojans.
I'll go in perſon to chaſtiſe the Greeks,
Both for your wrongs and mine. Inſpir'd by you,
What would I not atchieve? Again ſhall Troy
Riſe from its aſhes: this right arm ſhall fix
Her ſeat of empire, and your ſon ſhall reign.
Andr. Such dreams of greatneſs ſuit not my condition:
His hopes of empire periſh'd with his father.
No; thou imperial city, ancient Troy,
Thou pride of Aſia, founded by the Gods!
Never, Oh never, muſt we hope to ſee
Thoſe bulwarks riſe, which Hector could not guard!—
Sir, all I wiſh for is ſome quiet exile,
Where far from Greece remov'd, and far from you,
I may conceal my ſon, and mourn my huſband.
Your love creates me envy. Oh, return!
Return to your betroth'd Hermione.
Pyr. Why do you mock me thus? you know, I cannot.
You know my heart is yours; my ſoul hangs on you;
You take up every wiſh: my waking thoughts,
And nightly dreams, are all employ'd on you.
'Tis true, Hermione was ſent to ſhare
My throne and bed; and would with tranſport hear
The vows which you neglect.
Andr. She has no Troy,
No Hector to lament: ſhe has not loſt
A huſband by your conqueſts. Such a huſband!
(Tormenting thought!) whoſe death alone has made
Your ſire immortal: Pyrrhus and Achilles,
Are both grown great by my calamities.
Pyr. Madam, 'tis well! 'Tis very well! I find,
Your will muſt be obey'd; imperious captive,
It ſhall. Henceforth I blot you from my mind:
You teach me to forget your charms; to hate you:
For know, inhuman beauty, I have lov'd
Too well to treat you with indifference.
Think well upon it; my diſorder'd ſoul
Wavers between th' extreme of love and rage;
I have been too tame; I will awake to vengeance!

The ſon ſhall anſwer for the mother's ſcorn.
The Greeks demand him, nor will I endanger
My realms, to pleaſure an ungreateful woman.

Andr. Then he muſt die! alas, my ſon muſt die!
He has no friend, no ſuccour left, beſide
His mother's tears, and his own innocence.

Pyr. Go, madam, viſit this unhappy ſon.
The ſight of him may bend your ſtubborn heart,
And turn to ſoftneſs your unjuſt diſdain.
I ſhall once more expect your anſwer. Go;
And think, while you embrace the captive boy,
Think, that his life depends on your reſolves.

[*Exeunt Pyrrhus, and attendants.*

Andr. I'll go; and in the anguiſh of my heart,
Weep o'er my child—If he muſt die, my life
Is wrapt in his; I ſhall not long ſurvive.
'Tis for his ſake that I have ſuffer'd life,
Groan'd in captivity, and out-liv'd Hector.
Yes, my Aſtyanax, we'll go together!
Together to the realms of night we'll go!
There to thy raviſh'd eyes thy ſire I'll ſhew,
And point him out among the ſhades below. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. *Enter Hermione and Cleone.*

Her. WELL, I'll be rul'd, Cleone: I will ſee him:
I have told Pylades that he may bring him:
But truſt me, were I left to my own thoughts,
I ſhould forbid him yet.

Cleo. And why forbid him?
Is he not, madam, ſtill the ſame Oreſtes?
Oreſtes, whoſe return you oft have wiſh'd?
The man whoſe ſufferings you ſo late lamented,
And often prais'd his conſtancy and love?

Her. That love, that conſtancy, ſo ill requited,
Upbraids me to myſelf. I bluſh to think
How I have us'd him, and would ſhun his preſence.
What will be my confuſion, when he ſees me
Neglected and forſaken, like himſelf!
Will he not ſay, is this the ſcornful maid?
The proud Hermione? that tyranniz'd
In Sparta's court, and triumph'd in her charms?
Her inſolence at laſt is well repaid.
I cannot bear the thought.

Cleo. You wrong yourſelf
With unbecoming fears. He knows too well
Your beauty and your worth. Your lover comes not

To

To offer inſults, but repeat his vows,
And breathe his ardent paſſion at you feet.
But, madam, what's your royal father's will?
What orders do your letters bring from Sparta?
Her. His orders are, if Pyrrhus ſtill delay
The nuptials, and refuſe to ſacrifice
This Trojan boy, I ſhould with ſpeed embark,
And with their embaſſy return to Greece.
Cleo. What would you more? Oreſtes comes in time
To ſave your honour. Pyrrhus cools apace:
Prevent his falſhood, and forſake him firſt.
I know you hate him; you have told me ſo.
Her. Hate him! My injur'd honour bids me hate him.
The ungrateful man, to whom I fondly gave
My virgin heart; the man I lov'd ſo dearly;
The man I doated on! O, my Cleone!
How is it poſſible I ſhould not hate him!
Cleo. Then give him over, madam. Quit his court,
And with Oreſtes———
Her. No! I muſt have time
To work up all my rage! To meditate
A parting full of horror! My revenge
Will be but too much quicken'd by the traitor.
Cleo. Do you then wait new inſults, new affronts?
To draw you from your father! Than to leave you!
In his own court to leave you—for a captive!
If Pyrrhus can provoke you, he has done it.
Her. Why doſt thou heighten my diſtreſs? I fear
To ſearch out my own thoughts, and ſound my heart.
Be blind to what thou ſee'ſt: believe me cur'd:
Flatter my weakneſs; tell me I have conquer'd;
Think that my injur'd ſoul is ſet againſt him;
And do thy beſt to make me think ſo too.
Cleo. Why would you loiter here, then?
Her. Let us fly!
Let us be gone! I leave him to his captive:
Let him go kneel, and ſupplicate his ſlave.
Let us be gone!—But what if he repent?
What, if the perjur'd prince again ſubmit,
And ſue for pardon? What, if he renew
His former vows?—But, Oh, the faithleſs man!
He ſlights me! drives me to extremities!—However,
I'll ſtay, Cleone, to perplex their loves:
I'll ſtay, till, by an open breach of contract,
I make him hateful to the Greeks. Already

Their vengeance have I drawn upon the ſon;
The ſecond embaſſy ſhall claim the mother:
I will redouble all my griefs upon her.

Cleo. Ah, madam! whither does your rage tranſport you?
Andromache, alas! is innocent.
A woman plung'd in ſorrow, dead to love,
And when ſhe thinks of Pyrrhus, 'tis with horror.

Her. Would I had done ſo, too!—He had not then
Betray'd my eaſy faith.——But I, alas!
Diſcover'd all the fondneſs of my ſoul;
I made no ſecret of my paſſion to him,
Nor thought it dangerous to be ſincere.
My eyes, my tongue, my actions ſpoke my heart.

Cleo. Well might you ſpeak without reſerve, to one
Engag'd to you by ſolemn oaths and treaties.

Her. His ardour, too, was an excuſe to mine:
With other eyes he ſaw me then!——Cleone,
Thou may'ſt remember, every thing conſpir'd
To favour him: my father's wrongs aveng'd;
The Greeks triumphant; fleets of Trojan ſpoils;
His mighty ſire's, his own immortal fame;
His eager love—all, all conſpir'd againg me!
—But I have done—I'll think no more of Pyrrhus.
Oreſtes wants not merit, and he loves me.
My gratitude, my honour, both plead for him;
And if I've power o'er my heart, 'tis his.

Cleo. Madam, he comes——

Her. Alas! I did not think
He was ſo near! I wiſh I might not ſee him.

Enter Oreſtes.

How am I to interpet, ſir, this viſit?
Is it a compliment of form, or love?

Oreſ. Madam, you know my weakneſs. 'Tis my fate
To love unpity'd; to deſire to ſee you;
And ſtill to ſwear each time ſhall be the laſt.
My paſſion breaks thro' my repeated oaths,
And every time I viſit you, I'm perjur'd.
Even now, I find my wounds all bleed afreſh;
I bluſh to own it, but I know no cure.
I call the Gods to witneſs, I have try'd
Whatever man could do, (but try'd in vain)
To wear you from my mind. Thro' ſtormy ſeas,
I courted dangers, and long'd for death.

Her. Why will you, prince, indulge this mournful tale;
It ill becomes the ambaſſador of Greece

To

To talk of dying, and of love. Remember
The kings you repreſent: ſhall their revenge
Be diſappointed by your ill-tim'd paſſion?
Diſcharge your embaſſy—'tis not Oreſtes
The Greeks deſire ſhould die.
Oreſ. My embaſſy
Is at an end; for Pyrrhus has refus'd
To give up Hector's ſon. Some hidden power
Protects the boy.
Her. Faithleſs, ungrateful man! [*Sighs.*
Oreſ. I now prepare for Greece; but, ere I go,
Would hear my final doom pronounc'd by you—
What do I ſay?—I do already hear it!
My doom is fixt: I read it in your eyes.
Her. Will you then ſtill deſpair? be ſtill ſuſpicious?
What have I done? wherein have I been cruel?
'Tis true, you find me in the court of Pyrrhus;
But 'twas my royal father ſent me hither.
And who can tell, but I have ſhar'd your griefs?
Have I ne'er wept in ſecret?—never wiſh'd
To ſee Oreſtes?—
Oreſ. Wiſh'd to ſee Oreſtes!
O joy! O ecſtacy! My ſoul's intranc'd!
O charming princeſs! O tranſcendant maid!
My utmoſt wiſh!—Thus, thus let me expreſs
My boundleſs thanks!—I never was unhappy—
Am I Oreſtes?—
Her. You are Oreſtes:
The ſame unalter'd, generous, faithful lover;
The prince whom I eſteem, whom I lament,
And whom I fain would teach my heart to love.
Oreſ. Ay, there it is!—I have but your eſteem,
While Pyrrhus has your heart.
Her. Believe me, prince,
Were you as Pyrrhus, I ſhould hate you!
Oreſ. No!——
I ſhould be bleſt! I ſhould be lov'd as he is!—
Yet all this while I die in your diſdain,
While he neglects your charms, and courts another.
Her. And who has told you, prince, that I'm neglected?
Has Pyrrhus ſaid——(Oh, I ſhall go diſtracted)
Has Pyrrhus told you ſo? or is it you
Who think thus meanly of me?—Sir, perhaps,
All do not judge like you!——

Oreſ.

Oref. Madam, go on!
Inſult me ſtill; I'm us'd to bear your ſcorn.
Her. Why am I told who Pyrrhus loves or hates?
—Go, prince, and arm the Grecks againſt the rebel;
Let them lay waſte his country, raze his towns,
Deſtroy his fleets, his palaces—himſelf!——
Go, prince, and tell me then how much I love him.
Oref. To haſten his deſtruction, come yourſelf;
And work your royal father to his ruin.
Her. Meanwhile, he weds Andromache!
Oref. Ah, princeſs!
What is't I hear!
Her. What infamy for Greece,
If he ſhould wed a Phrygian and a captive?
Oref. Is this your hatred, madam?—'Tis in vain
To hide your paſſion; every thing betrays it:
Your looks, your ſpeech, your anger, nay, your ſilence,
Your love appears in all; your ſecret flame
Breaks out the more, the more you would conceal it.
Her. Your jealouſy perverts my meaning ſtill,
And wreſts each circumſtance to your diſquiet;
My very hate is conſtrued into fondneſs.
Oref. Impute my fears, if groundleſs, to my love.
Her. Then hear me, prince. Obedience to a father
Firſt brought me hither; and the ſame obedience
Detains me here, 'till Pyrrhus drive me hence,
Or my offended father ſhall recall me,
Tell this proud king, that Menelaus ſcorns
To match his daughter with a foe of Greece.
Bid him reſign Aſtyanax or me.
If he perſiſts to guard the hoſtile boy,
Hermione embarks with you for Sparta.

[*Exeunt Hermione and Cleone.*

Oref. Then is Oreſtes bleſt! My griefs are fled!
Fled like a dream!——Methinks I tread in air!
Pyrrhus enamour'd of the captive queen,
Will thank me, if I take her rival hence——
He looks not on the princeſs with my eyes!
Surpriſing happineſs!—unlook'd for joy!
Never let love deſpair!—The prize is mine!
Be ſmooth, ye ſeas, and ye propitious winds,
Breathe from Epirus to the Spartan coaſts!
I long to view the ſails unfurl'd!——But ſee!
Pyrrhus approaches in a happy hour.

Enter

Enter Pyrrhus and Phœnix.

Pyr. I was in pain to find you, prince. My warm
Ungovern'd temper, would not let me weigh
The importance of your embaſſy, and hear
You argue for my good.—I was to blame.
I ſince have pois'd your reaſons: and I thank
My good allies: their cares deſerves my thanks.
You have convinc'd me, that the weal of Greece,
My father's honour, and my own repoſe,
Demand that Hector's race ſhould be deſtroy'd.
I ſhall deliver up Aſtyanax,
And you yourſelf ſhall bear the victim hence.

Oref. If you approve it, ſir, and are content
To ſpill the blood of a defenceleſs child,
The offended Greeks, no doubt, will be appeas'd.

Pyr. Cloſer to ſtrain the knot of our alliance,
I have determin'd to eſpouſe Hermione.
You come in time to grace our nuptial rites:
In you the kings of Greece will all be preſent,
And you have right to perſonate her father,
As his ambaſſador, and brother's ſon.
Go prince, renew your viſit; tell Hermione,
To-morrow I receive her from your hands.

Oreſt. [*Aſide.*] O change of fortune! Oh, undone
Oreſtes! [*Exit.*

Pyr. Well, Phœnix! Am I ſtill a ſlave to love?
What think'ſt thou now? Am I myſelf again?

Phœn. 'Tis as it ſhould be; this diſcovers Pyrrhus;
Shews all the hero; now you are yourſelf—
The ſon, the rival of the great Achilles!
Greece will applaud you, and the world confeſs
Pyrrhus has conquer'd Troy a ſecond time!

Pyr. Nay, Phœnix, now I but begin to triumph;
I never was a conqueror till now!
Believe me, a whole hoſt, a war of foes,
May ſooner be ſubdu'd than love. O Phœnix!
What ruin have I ſhunn'd! The Greeks enrag'd,
Hung o'er me like a gathering ſtorm, and ſoon
Had burſt in thunder o'er my head; while I
Abandon'd duty, empire, honour, all,
To pleaſe a thankleſs woman!—One kind look
Had quite undone me!

Phœn. O, my royal maſter!
The gods, in favour of you, made her cruel.

Pyr. Thou ſaw'ſt with how much ſcorn ſhe treated me!
When

When I permitted her to ſee her ſon,
I hop'd it might have work'd her to my wiſhes.
I went to ſee the mournful interview,
And found her bath'd in tears, and loſt in paſſion.
Wild with diſtreſs, a thouſand times ſhe call'd
On Hector's name: and when I ſpoke in comfort,
And promis'd my protection to her ſon,
She kiſs'd the boy, and call'd again on Hector.
Does ſhe then think that I preſerve the boy
To ſoothe and keep alive her flame for Hector?

Phœn. No doubt, ſhe does; and thinks you favour'd in it;
But let her go, for an ungrateful woman!

Pyr. I know the thoughts of her proud ſtubborn heart:
Vain of her charms, and inſolent in beauty,
She mocks my rage; and when it threatens loudeſt,
Expects 'twill ſoon be humbled into love.
But we ſhall change our parts, and ſhe ſhall find
I can be deaf like her, and ſteel my heart.
She is Hector's widow; I, Achilles' ſon!
Pyrrhus is born to hate Andromache.

Phœn. My royal maſter, talk of her no more;
I do not like this anger. Your Hermione
Should now engroſs your thoughts. 'Tis time to ſee her;
'Tis time you ſhould prepare the nuptial rites,
And not rely upon a rival's care:
It may be dangerous.

Pyr. But tell me, Phœnix,
Doſt thou not think, the proud Andromache
Will be enrag'd, when I ſhall wed the princeſs?

Phœn. Why does Andromache ſtill haunt your thoughts?
What is't to you, be ſhe enrag'd or pleas'd?
Let her name periſh—think of her no more.

Pyr. No Phœnix!—I have been too gentle with her,
I have check'd my wrath, and ſtifled my reſentment:
She knows not yet to what degree I hate her.
Let us return—I'll brave her to her face:
I'll give my anger its free courſe againſt her.
Thou ſhalt ſee, Phœnix, how I'll break her pride!

Phœn. Oh, go not, ſir!—There's ruin in her eyes!
You do not know your ſtrength; you fall before her,
Adore her beauty, and revive her ſcorn.

Pyr. That were, indeed, a moſt unmanly weakneſs!
Thou doſt not know me, Phœnix.

Phœn. Ah, my prince!

You

You are ſtill ſtruggling in the toils of love.

Pyr. Can'ſt thou then think, I love this woman ſtill?
One who repays my paſſion with diſdain!
A ſtranger, captive, friendleſs, and forlorn;
She and her darling ſon within my power;
Her life a forfeit to the Greeks: yet I
Preſerve her ſon; would take her to my throne;
Would fight her battles, and avenge her wrongs;
And all this while ſhe treats me as her foe!

Phœn. You have it in your power to be reveng'd.

Pyr. Yes—and I'll ſhew my power! I'll give her cauſe
To hate me! her Aſtyanax ſhall die———
What tears will then be ſhed! How will ſhe then
In bitterneſs of heart reproach my name!
Then, to compleat her woes, will I eſpouſe
Hermione——'Twill ſtab her to the heart!

Phœn. Alas, you threaten like a lover ſtill!

Pyr. Phœnix, excuſe this ſtruggle of my ſoul;
'Tis the laſt effort of expiring love.

Phœn. Then haſten, ſir, to ſee the Spartan princeſs,
And turn the bent of your deſires on her.

Pyr. Oh! 'tis a heavy taſk to conquer love,
And wean the ſoul from her accuſtom'd fondneſs.
But, come——A long farewel to Hector's widow,
'Tis with a ſecret pleaſure I look back,
And ſee the many dangers I have paſs'd.
The merchant, thus, in dreadful tempeſts toſt,
Thrown by the waves on ſome unlook'd-for coaſt,
Oft turns, and ſees, with a delighted eye,
Midſt rocks and ſhelves, the broken billows fly!
And, while the outrageous winds the deep deform,
Smiles on the tumult, and enjoys the ſtorm. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. *Enter Pylades and Oreſtes.*

Pyl. FOR heaven's ſake, ſir, compoſe your ruffled mind,
And moderate your rage!

Oreſ. No, Pylades!
This is no time for counſel.—I am deaf.
Talk not of reaſon! I have been too patient.
Life is not worth my care. My ſoul grows deſperate.
I'll bear her off, or periſh in the attempt.
I'll force her from his arms——By Heaven, I will!

Pyl Well, 'tis agreed, my friend—We'll force her hence,
But ſtill conſider, we are in Epirus.
The court, the guards, Hermione herſelf,

The very air we breathe, belongs to Pyrrhus.
Good gods! what tempted you to ſeek her here?
Oreſ. Loſt to myſelf, I know not what I did!
My purpoſes were wild. Perhaps I came
To menace Pyrrhus, and upbraid the woman.
Pyl. This violence of temper may prove fatal.
Oreſ. It muſt be more than man to bear theſe ſhocks,
Theſe outrages of fate, with temper.
He tells me, that he weds Hermione,
And will to-morrow take her from my hand!——
My hand ſhall ſooner tear the tyrant's heart!
Pyl. Your paſſion blinds you, ſir; he's not to blame.
Could you but look into the ſoul of Pyrrhus,
Perhaps you'll find it tortur'd like your own.
Oreſ. No, Pylades?——'tis all deſign.——His pride,
To triumph over me, has chang'd his love.
The fair Hermione, before I came,
In all her bloom of beauty was neglected.
Ah, cruel gods! I thought her all my own!
She was conſenting to return to Sparta:
Her heart, divided betwixt rage and love,
Was on the wing to take its leave of Pyrrhus.
She heard my ſighs, ſhe pitied my complains,
She prais'd my conſtancy—The leaſt indifference
From this proud king, had made Oreſtes happy!
Pyl. So your fond heart believes!——
Take my advice——Think not to force her hence;
But fly yourſelf from her deſtructive charms.
Her ſoul is link'd to Pyrrhus—
Oreſ. Talk no more!
I cannot bear the thought! She muſt be mine!
Did Pyrrhus carry thunder in his hand,
I'd ſtand the bolt, and challenge all his fury,
Ere I reſign Hermione——By force
I'll ſnatch her hence, and bear her to my ſhips;
Have we forgot her mother Helen's rape?
Pyl. Will then Oreſtes turn a raviſher,
And blot his embaſſy?
Oreſ. O, Pylades!
My grief weighs heavy on me——'twill diſtract me!
The gods have ſet me as their mark, to empty
Their quivers on me.—Leave me to myſelf,
Mine be the danger, mine the enterprize.
All I requeſt of thee, is to return,
And in my place convey Aſtyanax

(As Pyrrhus has conſented) into Greece.
Go, Pylades——
Pyl. Lead on, my friend, lead on!
Let us bear off Hermione! No toil,
No danger can deter a friend———Lead on!
Draw up the Greeks, ſummon your num'rous train!
The ſhips are ready, and the wind ſits fair:
There eaſtward lies the ſea; the rolling waves
Break on thoſe palace ſtairs. I know each paſs,
Each avenue and outlet of the court.
This very night we'll carry her on board.
Oreſ. Thou art too good!—I treſpaſs on thy friendſhip:
But, Oh! excuſe a wretch, whom no man pities,
Except thyſelf: one, juſt about to loſe
The treaſure of his ſoul:
When will my friendſhip be of uſe to thee?
Pyl. The queſtion is unkind.—But now, remember
To keep your counſels cloſe, and hide your thoughts;
Let not Hermione ſuſpect—No more———
I ſee her coming, ſir———
Oreſ. Away, my friend;
I am adviſ'd; my all depends upon it. [*Exit Pylades.*

Enter Hermione and Cleone.

Oreſ. Madam, your orders are obey'd; I have ſeen
Pyrrhus, my rival; and have gain'd him for you.
The king reſolves to wed you.
Her. So I am told;
And, farther, I am inform'd, that you, Oreſtes,
Are to diſpoſe me for the intended marriage.
Oreſ. And are you, madam, willing to comply?
Her. What can I do, alas! my faith is promis'd:
Can I refuſe what is not mine to give?
A princeſs is not at her choice to love;
All we have left us is a blind obedience:
And yet you ſee how far I had comply'd,
And made my duty yield to your entreaties.
Oreſ. Ah, cruel maid! you knew—but I have done.
All have a right to pleaſe themſelves in love.
I blame you not. 'Tis true, I hop'd—but you
Are miſtreſs of your heart, and I'm content.
'Tis fortune is my enemy, not you.
But madam, I ſhall ſpare you farther pain
On this uneaſy theme, and take my leave. [*Exit Her.*

Her. Cleone, couldſt thou think he'd be ſo calm?
Cleon. Madam, his ſilent grief ſits heavy on him.
He is to be pitied. His too eager love
Has made him buſy to his own deſtruction.
His threats have wrought this change of mind in Pyrrhus.
Her. Doſt thou think Pyrrhus capable of fear?
Whom ſhould the intrepid Pyrrhus fear? The Greeks?
Did he not lead their harraſs'd troops to conqueſt,
When they deſpair'd, when they retir'd from Troy,
And ſought for ſhelter in their burning fleets?
Did he not then ſupply his father's place?
No, my Cleone, he is above conſtraint;
He acts unforc'd; and where he weds, he loves.
Cleon. Oh, that Oreſtes had remain'd in Greece!
I fear to-morrow will prove fatal to him.
Her. Wilt thou diſcourſe of nothing but Oreſtes?
Pyrrhus is mine again!——Is mine for ever!
Oh, my Cleone, I am wild with joy!
Pyrrhus, the bold, the brave, the godlike Pyrrhus!
—Oh, I could tell thee numberleſs exploits,
And tire thee with his battles.——Oh, Cleone——
Cleo. Madam, conceal your joy—I ſee Andromache—
She weeps, and comes to ſpeak her ſorrows to you.
Her. I would indulge the gladneſs of my heart!
Let us retire—Her grief is out of ſeaſon.

Enter Andromache and Cephiſa.

Andr. Ah, madam! whither, whither do you fly?
Where can your eyes behold a ſight more pleaſing
Than Hector's widow, ſuppliant and in tears?
I come not an alarm'd, a jealous foe,
To envy you a heart your charms have won—
The only man I ſought to pleaſe, is gone;
Kill'd in my ſight, by an inhuman hand.
Hector firſt taught me love; which my fond heart
Shall ever cheriſh, till we meet in death.
But, Oh, I have a ſon!—And you, one day,
Will be no ſtranger to a mother's fondneſs:
But heaven forbid that you ſhould ever know
A mother's ſorrow for an only ſon.
Her joy, her bliſs, her laſt ſurviving comfort!
When every hour ſhe trembles for his life!
Your power o'er Pyrrhus may relieve my fears.
Alas, what danger is there in a child,
Sav'd from the wreck of a whole ruin'd empire?
Let me go hide him in ſome deſart iſle:

You may rely upon my tender care
To keep him far from perils of ambition:
All he can learn of me will be to weep!

Her. Madam, 'tis eaſy to conceive your grief;
But, it would ill become me to ſolicit
In contradiction to my father's will:
'Tis he who urges to deſtroy your ſon.
Madam, if Pyrrhus muſt be wrought to pity,
No woman does it better than yourſelf.
If you gain him, I ſhall comply, of courſe.

[*Exeunt Hermione and Cleone.*

Andr. Didſt thou not mind with what diſdain ſhe ſpoke?
Youth and proſperity have made her vain;
She has not ſeen the fickle turns of life.

Ceph. Madam, were I as you, I'd take her counſel;
I'd ſpeak my own diſtreſs: one look from you
Will vanquiſh Pyrrhus, and confound the Greeks——
See, where he comes——Lay hold on this occaſion.

Enter Pyrrhus and Phœnix.

Pyr. Where is the princeſs?—Did you not inform me
Hermione was here? [*To Phœnix.*

Phœn. I thought ſo, ſir.

Andr. Thou ſeeſt what mighty power my eyes have on him! [*To Cephiſa.*

Pyr. What ſays ſhe, Phœnix?

Andr. I have no hope left!

Phœn. Let us be gone—Hermione expects you.

Ceph. For heaven's ſake, madam, break this ſullen ſilence.

Andr. My child's already promis'd——

Ceph. But not given.

Andr. No! no!—my tears are vain!—His doom is fixt!

Pyr. See if ſhe deigns to caſt one look upon us!
Proud woman!

Andr. I provoke him by my preſence.
Let us retire.

Pyr. Come, let us ſatisfy
The Greeks, and give them up this Phrygian boy.

Andr. Ah, ſir, recal thoſe words—What have you ſaid!
If you give up my ſon, Oh, give up me!
You, who ſo many times have ſworn me friendſhip:
Oh, heavens!—will you not look with pity on me?
Is there no hope? Is there no room for pardon?

Pyr. Phœnix will anſwer you—My word is paſt.

Andr. You, who would brave ſo many dangers for me.

Pyr. I was your lover then—I now am free.
To favour you, I might have ſpar'd his live;
But you would ne'er vouchſafe to aſk it of me.
Now 'tis too late.

Andr. Oh, ſir, excuſe
The pride of royal blood, that checks my ſoul,
And knows not how to be importunate.
You know, alas! I was not born to kneel,
To ſue for pity, and to own a maſter.

Pyr. No! in your heart you curſe me! you diſdain
My generous flame, and ſcorn to be oblig'd!
But I ſhall leave you to your great reſentments.
Let us go, Phœnix, and appeaſe the Greeks.

Andr. Then let me die! and let me go to Hector.

Ceph. But, madam——

Andr. What can I do more? The tyrant
Sees my diſtraction, and inſults my tears. [*To Ceph.*
—Behold, how low you have reduc'd a queen!
Theſe eyes have ſeen my country laid in aſhes,
My kindred fall in war, my father ſlain,
My huſband dragg'd in his own blood, my ſon
Condemn'd to bondage, and myſelf a ſlave;
Yet, in the midſt of theſe unheard-of woes,
'Twas ſome relief to find myſelf your captive;
And that my ſon, deriv'd from ancient kings,
Since he muſt ſerve, had Pyrrhus for his maſter.
When Priam kneel'd, the great Achilles wept:
I hop'd I ſhould not find his ſon leſs noble:
I thought the brave were ſtill the more compaſſionate.
Oh, do not, ſir, divide me from my child!—
If he muſt die——

Pyr. Phœnix, withdraw a while. [*Exit Phœnix.*

Pyr. Riſe, madam—Yet you may preſerve your ſon.
I find, whenever I provoke your tears,
I furniſh you with arms againſt myſelf.
I thought my hatred fixt before I ſaw you.
Oh, turn your eyes upon me while I ſpeak!
And ſee if you diſcover in my looks
An angry judge, or an obdurate foe.
Why will you force me to deſert your cauſe?
In your ſon's name I beg we may be friends.
Think, Oh think,
'Tis the laſt time, you both may yet be happy!
I know the ties I break, the foes I arm;
I wrong Hermoine; I ſend her hence;

And

And with her diadem I bind your brows.
Conſider well; for 'tis of moment to you!
Chooſe to be wretched, madam, or a queen.
I leave you to your thoughts. When I return,
We'll to the temple—There you'll find you ſon;
And there be crown'd, or give him up for ever. [*Exit.*

Ceph. I told you, madam, that in ſpite of Greece,
You would o'er-rule the malice of your fortune.

Andr. Alas, Cephiſa, what have I obtain'd!
Only a poor ſhort reſpite for my ſon.

Ceph. You have enough approv'd your faith to Hector;
To be reluctant ſtill would be a crime.
He would himſelf perſuade you to comply.

Andr. How!——wouldſt thou give me Pyrrhus for a huſband?

Ceph. Think you 'twill pleaſe the ghoſt of your dead huſband,
That you ſhould ſacrifice his ſon? Conſider,
Pyrrhus once more invites you to a throne;
Turns all his power againſt the foes of Troy,
Remembers not Achilles was his father;
Retracts his conqueſt, and forgets his hatred.

Andr. But how can I forget it!—how can I
Forget my Hector, treated with diſhonour;
Depriv'd of funeral rites, and vilely dragg'd,
A bloody corpſe, about the walls of Troy!
Can I forget the good old king his father,
Slain in my preſence—at the altar ſlain!
Which vainly, for protection, he embrac'd.
Haſt thou forgot that dreadful night, Cephiſa,
When a whole people fell! Methinks I ſee
Pyrrhus enrag'd, and, breathing vengeance, enter
Amidſt the glare of burning palaces:
I ſee him hew his paſſage thro' my brothers,
And, bath'd in blood, lay all my kindred waſte.
Think, in this ſcene of horror, what I ſuffer'd!
This is the courtſhip I receiv'd from Pyrrhus
And this the huſband thou wouldſt give me! No,
We both will periſh firſt! I'll ne'er conſent.

Ceph. Since you reſolve Aſtyanax ſhall die,
Haſte to the temple, bid your ſon farewel.
Why do you tremble, madam?

Andr. O Cephiſa!
Thou haſt awaken'd all the mother in me.
How can I bid farewel to the dear child,

The pledge, the image of my much-lov'd lord!
But, Oh! while I deliberate, he dies.
No, no, thou muſt not die, while I can ſave thee:
Oh! let me find out Pyrrhus—Oh, Cephiſa!
Do you go find him.

Ceph. What muſt I ſay to him?

Andr. Tell him I love my ſon to ſuch exceſs—
But doſt thou think he means the child ſhall die?
Can love rejected turn to ſo much rage?

Ceph. Madam, he'll ſoon be here: reſolve on ſomething.

Andr. Well, then, aſſure him———

Ceph. Madam, of your love?

Andr. Alas, the know'ſt that is not in my power.
O my dead Lord! Oh, Priam's royal houſe!
Oh, my Aſtyanax! at what a price
Thy mother buys thee!—Let us go.

Ceph. But whither?
And what does your unſettled heart reſolve?

Andr. Come, my Cephiſa, let us go together,
To the ſad monument which I have rais'd
To Hector's ſhade; where, in their ſacred urn,
The aſhes of my hero lie inclos'd,
The dear remains which I have ſav'd from Troy;
There let me weep, there ſummon to my aid,
With pious rite, my Hector's awful ſhade;
Let him be witneſs to my doubts, my fears;
My agonizing heart, my flowing tears:
Oh! may he riſe in pity from his tomb,
And fix his wretched ſon's uncertain doom. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. *Enter Hermione, and Cleone.*

Cleo. THIS unexpected ſilence, this reſerve,
This outward calm, this ſettled frame of mind,
After ſuch wrongs and inſults, much ſurprize me!
You, who before could not command your rage,
When Pyrrhus look'd but kindly on his captive;
How can you bear unmov'd, that he ſhould wed her,
And ſeat her on a throne which you ſhould fill?
I fear this dreadful ſtillneſs in your ſoul!—
'Twere better, madam———

Her. Have you call'd Oreſtes?

Cleo. Madam, I have; his love is too impatient
Not to obey with ſpeed the welcome ſummons.
His love-ſick heart o'erlooks his unkind uſage:
His ardour's ſtill the ſame—Madam, he's here.

Enter

Enter Oreſtes.

Oreſ. Ah, madam, is it true? does then Oreſtes
At length attend you by your own commands?
What can I do——

Her. Oreſtes, do you love me?

Oreſ. What means that queſtion, princeſs? Do I love you?
My oaths, my perjuries, my hopes, my fears,
My farewel, my return——all ſpeak my love.

Her. Avenge my wrongs, and I believe them all.

Oreſ. It ſhall be done—My ſoul has catch'd th' alarm.
We'll ſpirit up the Greeks—I'll lead them on:
Your cauſe ſhall animate our fleets and armies,
Let us return; let us not loſe a moment,
But urge the fate of this devoted land:
Let us depart.

Her. No, prince, let us ſtay here!
I will have vengeance here—I will not carry
This load of infamy to Greece, nor truſt
The chance of war to vindicate my wrongs.
Ere I depart, I'll make Epirus mourn.
If you avenge me, let it be this inſtant;
My rage brooks no delay; haſte to the temple,
Haſte, prince, and ſacrifice him.

Oreſ. Whom?

Her. Why, Pyrrhus.

Oreſ. Pyrrhus! Did you ſay Pyrrhus?

Her. You demur,——
Oh fly! be gone! give me not time to think——
Talk not of laws—he tramples on all laws——
Let me not hear him juſtify'd—away!

Oreſ. You cannot think I'll juſtify my rival.
Madam, your love has made him criminal.
You ſhall have vengeance; I'll have vengeance too;
But let our hatred be profeſt and open:
Let us alarm all Greece, denounce a war;
Let us attack him in his ſtrength, and hunt him down
By conqueſt: Should I turn baſe aſſaſſin,
'Twould ſully all the kings I repreſent.

Her. Have not I been diſhonour'd? ſet at nought?
Expos'd to public ſcorn?—And will you ſuffer
The tyrant, who dares uſe me thus, to live?
Know, prince, I hate him more than once I lov'd him.
The Gods alone can tell how once I lov'd him;
Yes, the falſe, perjur'd man, I once did love him;

And

And, ſpite of all his crimes and broken vows,
If he ſhould live, I may relapſe—who knows
But I to-morrow may forgive his wrongs?

Oreſ. Firſt let me tear him piece-meal—he ſhall die.
But, madam, give me leiſure to contrive
The place, the time, the manner of his death;
Yet I'm a ſtranger in the court of Pyrrhus;
Scarce have I ſet my foot within Epirus,
When you enjoin me to deſtroy the prince.
It ſhall be done this very night.

Her. But now,
This very hour, he weds Andromache;
The temple ſhines with pomp; the golden throne
Is now prepar'd; the joyful rites begin;
My ſhame is public——Oh, be ſpeedy, prince!
My wrath's impatient—Pyrrhus lives too long!
Intent on love, and heedleſs of his perſon,
He covers with his guards the Trojan boy.
Now is the time; aſſemble all your Greeks:
Mine ſhall aſſiſt them; let their fury looſe:
Already they regard him as a foe.
Begone, Oreſtes—kill the faithleſs tyrant;
My love ſhall recompence the glorious deed.

Oreſ. Conſider, madam——

Her. You but mock my rage!
I was contriving how to make you happy.
Think you to merit by your idle ſighs,
And not atteſt your love by one brave action?
Go, with your boaſted conſtancy! and leave
Hermione to execute her own revenge.
I bluſh to think how my too eaſy faith
Has twice been baffled in one ſhameful hour!

Oreſ. Hear me but ſpeak!—you know I'll die to ſerve you!

Her. I'll go myſelf: I'll ſtab him at the altar;
Then drive the poniard, reeking with his blood,
Thro' my own heart. In death we ſhall unite.
Better to die with him, than live with you!

Oreſ. That were to make him bleſt, and me more wretched.
Madam, he dies by me——Have you a foe,
And ſhall I let him live? My rival, too?
Ere yon meridian ſun declines, he dies;
And you ſhall ſay that I deſerve your love.

Her. Go, prince; ſtrike home! and leave the reſt to me;

Let

Let all your ſhips ſtand ready for our flight. [*Exit Oreſ.*

Cleo. Madam, you'll periſh in this bold attempt.

Her. Give me my vengeance, I'm content to periſh.
I was to blame to truſt it with another:
In my own hands it had been more ſecure.
Oreſtes hates not Pyrrhus as I hate him.
Oh, would Oreſtes, when he gives the blow,
Tell him he dies my victim!—Haſte, Cleone;
Charge him to ſay, Hermione's reſentment,
Not thoſe of Greece, have ſentenc'd him to death.
Haſte, my Cleone! My revenge is loſt,
If Pyrrhus knows not that he dies by me!

Cleo. I ſhall obey your orders——— But I ſee
The king approach—Who could expect him here?

Her. O fly? Cleone, fly! and bid Oreſtes
Not to proceed a ſtep before I ſee him. [*Exit Cleone.*

Enter Pyrrhus.

Pyr. Madam, I ought to ſhun an injur'd princeſs:
Your diſtant looks reproach me: and I come
Not to defend, but to avow my guilt.
Pyrrhus will ne'er approve his own injuſtice,
Nor form excuſes while his heart condemns him.
Diſcharge your anger on this perjur'd man!
For I abhor my crime! and ſhould be pleas'd
To hear you ſpeak your wrongs aloud: no terms,
No bitterneſs of wrath, nor keen reproach,
Will equal half the upbraidings of my heart.

Her. I find, ſir, you can be ſincere: you ſcorn
To act you crimes with fear, like other men.
A hero ſhould be bold; above all laws;
Be bravely falſe, and laugh at ſolemn ties.
To be perfidious ſhews a daring mind!
And you have nobly triumph'd o'er a maid!
To court me—to reject me—to return——
Then to forſake me for a Phrygian ſlave—
To lay proud Troy in aſhes—then to raiſe
The ſon of Hector, and renounce the Greeks,
Are actions worthy the great ſoul of Pyrrhus!

Pyr. Madam, go on: give your reſentment birth,
And pour forth all your indignation on me.

Her. 'Twould pleaſe your queen, ſhould I upbraid your falſhood;
Call you perfidious, traitor, all the names
That injur'd virgins laviſh on your ſex;
I ſhould o'erflow with tears, and die with grief,
And furniſh out a talet to ſooth her pride; But

But, ſir, I would not over-charge her joys.
If you would charm Andromache, recount
Your bloody battles, your exploits, you ſlaughters.
Your great atchievements in her father's palace.
She needs muſt love the man, who fought ſo bravely,
And in her ſight ſlew half her royal kindred!

Pyr. With horror I look back on my paſt deeds!
I puniſh'd Helen's wrongs too far; I ſhed
Too much of blood: but, madam, Helen's daughter
Should not object thoſe ills the mother caus'd.
However, I am pleas'd to find you hate me—
I was too forward to accuſe myſelf—
The man who ne'er was lov'd, can ne'er be falſe.
Obedience to a father brought you hither;
And I ſtood bound by promiſe to receive you:
But our deſires are different ways inclin'd;
And you, I own, were not oblig'd to love me.

Her. Have I not lov'd you then! perfidious man!
For you I ſlighted all the Grecian princes;
Forſook my father's houſe; conceal'd my wrongs,
When moſt provok'd; would not return to Sparta,
In hopes that time might fix your wavering heart.
I lov'd you when inconſtant; and even now,
Inhuman king! that you pronounce my death,
My heart ſtill doubts, if I ſhould love, or hate you—
But, Oh, ſince you reſolve to wed another,
Defer your cruel purpoſe till to morrow,
That I may not be here to grace her triumph!
This is the laſt requeſt I e'er ſhall make you—
See, if the barbarous prince vouchſafes an anſwer!
Go, then, to the lov'd Phrygian; hence! begone!
And bear to her thoſe vows that once were mine:
Go, in defiance of the avenging gods!
Begone! the prieſt expects you at the altar—
But, tyrant, have a care I come not thither. [*Exit.*

Enter Phœnix.

Phœn. Sir, did you mind her threats? your life's in danger:
There is no trifling with a woman's rage.
The Greeks that ſwarm about the court, all hate you;
Will treat you as their country's enemy,
And join in her revenge: beſides, Oreſtes
Still loves her to diſtraction. Sir, I beg——

Pyr. How, Phœnix, ſhould I fear a woman's threats?
A nobler paſſion takes up all my thoughts:

I muſt

I muſt prepare to meet Andromache.
Do thou place all my guards about her ſon:
If he be ſafe, Pyrrhus is free from fear. [*Exit.*
Phœn. Oh, Pyrrhus! Oh, what pity 'tis the gods,
Who fill'd thy ſoul with every kingly virtue,
Form'd thee for empire and conſummate greatneſs,
Should leave thee ſo expos'd to wild deſires,
That hurry thee beyond the bounds of reaſon! [*Flouriſh.*
But ſee, the queen,
Magnificent in royal pride, appears.
I muſt obey, and guard her ſon from danger. [*Exit.*

Enter Andromache and Cephiſa.

Ceph. Madam, once more you look and move a queen.
Your ſorrows are diſpers'd, your charms revive,
And every faded beauty blooms anew.
Andr. Yet all is not as I could wiſh, Cephiſa.
Ceph. You ſee the king is watchful o'er your ſon;
Decks him with princely robes, with guards ſurrounds him.
Aſtyanax begins to reign already.
Andr. Pyrrhus is nobly minded; and I fain
Would live to thank him for Aſtyanax:
'Tis a vain thought.——However, ſince my child
Has ſuch a friend, I ought not to repine.
Ceph. For Heaven's ſake, madam, let me know your griefs.
If you diſtruſt my faith————
Andr. That were to wrong thee.
Oh, my Cephiſa! This gay, borrow'd air,
This blaze of jewels, and this bridal dreſs,
Are but mock trappings, to conceal my woe:
My heart ſtill mourns; I ſtill am Hector's widow.
Ceph. Will you then break the promiſe giv'n to Pyrrhus.
Blow up his rage again, and blaſt your hopes?
And. I though, Cephiſa, thou hadſt known thy miſtreſs.
Couldſt thou believe I would be falſe to Hector?
Fall off from ſuch a huſband! Break his reſt,
And call him to this hated light again,
To ſee Andromache in Pyrrhus' arms!
Ceph. I cannot gueſs what drift your thoughts purſue;
But, Oh, I fear there's ſomething dreadful in it!
Muſt then Aſtyanax be doom'd to die,
And you to linger out a life in bondage?
Andr. Know then the ſecret purpoſe of my ſoul:
Andromache will not be falſe to Pyrrhus,
Nor violate her ſacred love to Hector. This

This hour I'll meet the king; the holy prieſt
Shall join us, and confirm our mutual vows.
This will ſecure a father to my child:
That done, I have no farther uſe for life:
This pointed dagger, this determin'd hand,
Shall ſave my virtue, and conclude my woes.
Cephiſa, thou
Wilt lend a hand to cloſe thy miſtreſs' eyes.

Ceph. Oh, never think that I will ſtay behind you!

Andr. No, my Cephiſa; I muſt have thee live.
I muſt commit into thy faithful hands
All that is dear and precious to my ſoul:
Live, and ſupply my abſence to my child.
All that remains of Troy; a future progeny
Of heroes, and a diſtant line of kings,
In him, is all intruſted to thy care.

Ceph. Oh for a ſpirit to ſupport my grief!
Is there aught more, before you go for ever?

Andr. Oh, my Cephiſa! my ſwoln heart is full!
I have a thouſand farewels to my ſon——
But tears break in!—Grief interrupts my ſpeech!——
My ſoul o'erflows in fondneſs!—Let him know
I dy'd to ſave him—and would die again.
Seaſon his mind with early hints of glory;
Make him acquainted with his anceſtors;
Trace out their ſhining ſtory in his thoughts;
Dwell on the exploits of his immortal father;
And ſometimes let him hear his mother's name.
He muſt be taught to ſtifle his reſentments,
And ſacrifice his vengeance to his ſafety.
Should he prove headſtrong, raſh, or unadvis'd,
He then will fruſtrate all his mother's virtue,
Provoke his fate, and I ſhall die in vain.

Ceph. Alas, I fear I never ſhall outlive you!

Andr. No more—thy tears, Cephiſa, will betray me;
Aſſume a cheerful look—But ſtill remember——

[*Flouriſh within.*

Hark how the trumpet, with its ſprightly notes,
Proclaims th' appointed hour, and calls us hence:
Hector, I come once more a queen, to join thee!
Thus the gay victim, with freſh garlands crown'd,
Pleas'd with the ſacred fife's enlivening ſound,
Thro' gazing crowns, in ſolemn ſtate proceed;
And, dreſt in fatal pomp, magnificently bleeds.

ACT

ACT. V. *Hermione alone.*

WHAT have I done? Where am I? Where is Pyrrhus?
Ye Gods! what mean theſe horrors?—I'm undone!
My ſoul is on the rack!—— I cannot bear it!———
Why do I wander, like ſome guilty ghoſt?
What brought me to his place? What keeps me here?
The court of Pyrrhus has no room for me!
Do I ſtill doubt, if I ſhould love or hate him?
Hard-hearted man! how unconcern'd he left me!
Did he once ſigh? beſtow one pitying look?
Once ſhed a tear? or ſpeak one ſoft, kind word?
Did he ſo much as feign one moment's ſorrow,
To calm my grief, and mitigate his falſhood?—
Why am I ſtill thus anxious for his life?
Why do I ſtart at his impending fate?
Shall he then live? Shall the baſe traitor live
To laugh at my diſtreſs? No, let him periſh!
Be quick, Oreſtes!———Execute my orders!
Alas! my orders! Oh, prepoſterous guilt!
Can I decree the death of him I love?
Was it for this my ſoul delighted in him?
Was it for this I left my father's court?
Have I then croſs'd ſo many realms and ſeas
To murder Pyrrhus? *Enter Cleone.*
Oh, Cleone, help me!
What have I done? Is Pyrrhus yet alive?
What ſay'ſt thou?—Anſwer me—Where is the king?

Cleo. Madam, I ſaw the cruel prince ſet foward,
Triumphant in his looks, and full of joy.
Still as he walk'd, his raviſh'd eyes were fix'd
On the fair captive; while thro' ſhouting crowds
She paſs'd along with a dejected air,
And ſeem'd to mourn her Hector to the laſt.

Her. Inſulting tyrant! I ſhall burſt with rage!—
But ſay, Cleone, didſt thou mark him well?
Was his brow ſmooth? Say, did there not appear
Some ſhade of grief? ſome little cloud of ſorrow?
Did he not ſtop? Did he not once look back?
Didſt thou approach him? Was he not confounded?
Did he not———Oh, be quick, and tell me all!

Cleo. Madam, the tumult of his joy admits
No thought but love. Unguarded he march'd on,
'Midſt a promiſcuous throng of friends and foes,
His cares all turn upon Aſtyanax,

Whom he has lodg'd within the citadel.
Defended by the ſtrength of all his guards.

Her. Enough!—He dies!—The traitor!—Where's Oreſtes?

Cleo. He's in the temple, with his whole retinue.

Her. Is he ſtill reſolute? Is he ſtill determin'd?

Cleo. He's in the temple, with his whole retinue.

Her. Is he ſtill reſolute? Is he ſtill determin'd?

Cleo. Madam, I fear——

Her. How!—Is Oreſtes falſe?
Does he betray me, too?

Cleo. A thouſand doubts
Perplex his ſoul, and wound him with remorſe;
His virtue and his love prevail by turns.
He told me Pyrrhus ſhould not fall ignobly—
Pyrrhus, the warlike ſon of great Achilles.
He dreads the cenſure of the Grecian ſtates;
Of all mankind, and fears to ſtain his honour.

Her. Poor timorous wretch! 'tis falſe! he baſely fears
To cope with dangers, and encounter death:
'Tis that he fears.—Am I bright Helen's daughter?
To vindicate her wrongs all Greece conſpir'd;
For her confederate nations fought, and king were ſlain;
Troy was o'erthrown, and a whole empire fell.
My eyes want force to raiſe a lover's arm
Againſt a tyrant that has dar'd to wrong me!

Cleo. Madam, like Helen, truſt your cauſe to Greece.

Her. No; I'll avenge myſelf, I'll to the temple;
I'll overturn the altar, ſtab the prieſt!
I'll hurl deſtruction, like a whirlwind, round me!
They muſt not wed! they muſt not live! they ſhall not!
Let me be gone—I have no time to loſe——
Stand off! hold me not! I am all diſtraction!
O Pyrrhus! tyrant! thou ſhalt bleed.

Enter Oreſtes.

Oreſ. Madam, 'tis done: your orders are obey'd:
The tyrant lies expiring at the altar.

Her. Is Pyrrhus ſlain?——

Oreſ. Even now he gaſps in death.
Our Greeks, all undiſtinguiſh'd in the crowd,
Flock'd to the temple, and diſpers'd themſelves
On every ſide the altar: I was there:
Pyrrhus obſerv'd me with a haughty eye,
And, proud to triumph over Greece in me,
From his own brows he took the diadem,

And bound it on temples of his captive.
Receive, ſaid he, my crown; receive my faith,
Mine and my people's ſovereign reign for ever,
From this bleſt hour, a father to your ſon;
From ſcourge his foes: henceforward he be ſtyl'd
The Trojan king:
His ſubjects with loud acclamations ſhook
The ſpacious dome! our Greeks, enrag'd, cry'd out
Revenge! revenge! broke thro' the thronging preſs,
And ruſh'd tumultuous on the unguarded king.
Pyrrhus awhile oppos'd their claſhing ſwords,
And dealt his fatal blows on every ſide,
With manly fierceneſs; till oppreſt by numbers,
Streaming with blood, all over gaſh'd with wounds,
He reel'd, he groan'd, and at the altar fell.—
Haſte, madam; let us fly! haſte to our ſhips,!
They lie unmoor'd—Our friends attend us there.

Her. What have they done!

Oreſ. Madam, forgive their rage.
I own your vengeance had been more complete
Had Pyrrhus fall'n by me; and had he known,
Hermione chaſtis'd him by my arm.

Her. Peace, monſter, peace!—Go! tell thy horrid tale
To ſavages, and howl it out in deſerts.
Wouldſt thou impute to me thy barbarous guilt?
Me wouldſt thou make th' accomplice of thy crimes!
Hence, to thy Greeks! and boaſt thy foul exploits!
My ſoul abhors them! I diſclaim the deed!
Begone! I know thee not, thou fell barbarian!
What had he done? What could provoke thy madneſs
To aſſaſſinate ſo great, ſo brave a man?
Who ſet thee on?

Oreſ. Oh, grant me patience, Heaven!
With your own lips did you not curſe the tyrant,
Pronounce his death, and urge me to deſtroy him?

Her. What if, tranſported by my boundleſs paſſion,
I could not bear to ſee him wed another,
Were you t' obey a jealous woman's phrenzy?
You ſhould have div'd into my inmoſt thoughts:
My heart, tho' full of rage, was free from malice;
And all my anger was exceſs of love.
Why did you take me at my word? You ſaw
The ſtruggles of my ſoul; you heard me rave;
You ſhould have queſtion'd me a thouſand times,
Yet ſtill have doubted, and have queſtion'd on,

Before you ventur'd on a life ſo precious.

Oreſ. Hear me but ſpeak—Heaven knows, againſt my will——

Her. Why did you not return? Why not conſult me
A ſecond time? and, undetermin'd ſtill,
Again return, and ſtill find new delays?
What had your raſh officious Greeks, dire blood hounds!
To do with my revenge? What drew you hither?
To bring on me the vengeful woes that haunt you?
Are theſe the fruits of your deteſted love?
Your fatal embaſſy, your hated preſence
Drove Pyrrhus to my rival, and deſtroys
Both him and me.—He might have lov'd me ſtill,
Had you ne'er interpoſ'd.—Avaunt! begone!
And leave me in Epirus.—I renounce
My friends, my country, Greece, and all mankind:
But chiefly I renounce thee! monſter, thee! [*Exit.*

Oreſ. Am I awake? where am I? Soft, my ſoul;
Be not too raſh ——Was that Hermione?
Why ſhou'd her anger thunder againſt me?
Was not this blood ſhed all by her command?—
I am indeed a moſt outrageous monſter!
A ruffian, murderer, a baſe aſſaſſin!
And all to pleaſe a falſe ungrateful woman?
Henceforward, let the laws of nature ceaſe;
And let the pale that ſevers right and wrong,
Things ſacred and profane, be broken down;
Gods in their temples, kings upon their thrones,
Are not in ſafety while Oreſtes lives.
Oh, never more ſhall my torn mind be heal'd,
Nor taſte the gentle comforts of repoſe!
A dreadful band of gloomy cares ſurround me,
And lay ſtrong ſiege to my diſtracted ſoul.

Enter Pylades, attended by Greeks.

Pyl. Haſte, prince; let us be gone: 'tis death to ſtay.
Andromache reigns queen: ſhe gives the alarm,
And vows revenge upon the foes of Pyrrhus.
The people arm and muſter in the ſtreets:
Our Greeks will not be able long to guard
The palace gates, and to ſecure our flight.
We muſt be ſpeedy, ſir.

Oreſ. You may depart,
My friends—Hermione and I remain ——
Her cruelty has quite undone me!

Pyl. Alas, unhappy princeſs!—She's no more.

Oreſ. Hermione no more!—O, all ye powers! *Pyl.*

Pyl. Full of diſorder, wildneſs in her looks,
With hands expanded, and diſhevell'd hair,
Breathleſs and pale, with ſhrieks ſhe ſought the temple;
In the mid-way ſhe met the corpſe of Pyrrhus;
She ſtartled at the ſight; then, ſtiff with horror,
Gaz'd frightful! Waken'd from the dire amaze,
She rais'd her eyes to Heaven with ſuch a look
As ſpoke her ſorrows, and reproach'd the Gods;
Then plung'd a poignard deep within her breaſt,
And fell on Pyrrhus, graſping him in death.

Oreſ. I thank you, Gods—I never could expect
To be ſo wretched!——You have been induſtrious
To finiſh your decrees; to make Oreſtes
A dreadful inſtance of your power to puniſh;
I'm ſingled out to bear the wrath of Heaven.

Pyl. You hazard your retreat by theſe delays.
The guards will ſoon beſet us. Your complaints
Are vain, and may be fatal.

Oreſ. True, my friend:
And therefore 'twas I thank'd the bounteous Gods,
My fate's accompliſh'd.—I ſhall die content.
Oh, bear me hence—Blow, winds!

Pyl. Let us be gone.

Oreſ. The murder'd lovers wait me—Hark, they call!
Nay, if your blood ſtill reeks, I'll mingle mine:
One tomb will hold us all.

Pyl. Alas! I fear
His raving will return with his misfortunes.

Oreſ. I am dizzy!——Clouds!——Quite loſt in utter darkneſs!
Guide me, ſome friendly pilot, thro' the ſtorm.
I ſhiver! Oh, I freeze!—So—Light returns;
'Tis the grey dawn——See, Pylades! behold!——
I am encompaſs'd with a ſea of blood!——
The crimſon billows!—Oh! my brain's on fire!

Pyl. How is it, ſir?—Repoſe yourſelf on me.

Oreſ. Pyrrhus, ſtand off!--What wouldſt thou?—How he glares!
What envious hand has clos'd thy wounds?——Have at thee.
It is Hermione that ſtrikes—Confuſion!
She catches Pyrrhus in her arms.—Oh, ſave me!
How terrible ſhe looks!—She knits her brow!
She frowns me dead; ſhe frights me into madneſs!
Where am I?—Who are you?

Pyl.

Pyl. Alas, poor prince!

Oreſ. This is moſt kind, my Pylades—Oh, why,
Why was I born to give thee endleſs trouble?

Pyl. All will go well—He ſettles into reaſon.

Oreſ. Who talks of reaſon? Better to have none,
Than not enough.—Run, ſome one, tell my Greeks
I will not have them touch the king—Now—now!
I blaze again!—See there—Look where they come;
A ſhoal of furies—How they ſwarm about me!
My terror!—Hide me!—Oh, their ſnaky locks!
Hark, how they hiſs!—See, ſee their flaming brands!
Now they let drive at me!——How they grin,
And ſhake their iron whips!—My ears! what yelling!
And ſee, Hermione!——ſhe ſets them on——
Thruſt not your ſcorpions thus into my boſom!
Oh!—I am ſtung to death!—Diſpatch me ſoon!
There—take my heart, Hermione!—Tear it out!
Diſjoint me!—kill me!—Oh, my tortur'd ſoul!

Pyl. Kind Heaven, reſtore him to his wonted calm!
Oft have I ſeen him rave, but never thus—
Quite ſpent!—Aſſiſt me, friends, to bear him off.
Our time is ſhort: ſhould his ſtrong rage return,
'Twould be beyond our power to force him hence.
Away, my friends!—I hear the portal open. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Phœnix, attended by guards.

Phœn. All, all are fled!——Oreſtes is not here!——
Triumphant villains!—The baſe, giddy rabble,
Whoſe hands ſhould all have been employ'd with fire,
To waſte the fleet, flock'd round the dying princeſs:
And, while they ſtand agaze, the Greeks embark.
Oh, 'tis too plain!——This ſacrileg'ous murder
Was authoriz'd.——Th' ambaſſador's eſcape
Declares his guilt.——Moſt bloody embaſſy!
Moſt unexampled deeds!——Where, where, ye Gods,
Is majeſty ſecure, if in your temples
You give it no protection!——See, the queen.

[*A flouriſh of trumpets.*

Enter Andromache, and Cephiſa, with attendants.

Andr. Yes, ye inhuman Greeks! the time will come
When you ſhall dearly pay your bloody deeds!
How ſhould the Trojans hope for mercy from you,
When thus you turn your impious rage on Pyrrhus;
Pyrrhus, the braveſt man in all your league;
The man, whoſe ſingle valour made you triumph.

[*A dead march behind.*

Is

Is my child there?———
Ceph. It is the corps of Pyrrhus;
The weeping ſoldiers bear him on their ſhields.
Andr. Ill-fated prince! too negligent of life!
And too unwary of the fairleſs Greeks!
Cut off in the freſh rip'ning prime of manhood,
E'en in the prime of life; thy triumphs new,
And all thy glories in full bloſſom round thee!
The very Trojans would bewail thy fate.
Ceph. Alas, then, will your ſorrows never end!
Andr. Oh, never, never!—While I live, my tears
Will never ceaſe; for I was born to grieve.—
Give preſent orders for the fun'ral pomp: [*To Phœn.*
Let him be rob'd in all his regal ſtate;
Place round him every ſhining mark of honour;
And let the pile that conſecrates his aſhes,
Riſe like his fame, and blaze above the clouds.
[*Exit Phœnix. A flouriſh of trumpets.*
Ceph. The ſound proclaims th' arrival of the prince,
The guards conduct him from the citadel.
Andr. With open arms I'll meet him!—O, Cephiſa!
A ſpringing joy, mixt with a ſoft concern,
A pleaſure, which no language can expreſs,
An ecſtacy, that mothers only feel,
Plays round my heart, and brightens up my ſorrow,
Like gleams of ſunſhine in a low'ring ſky.

Tho' plung'd in ills, and exercis'd in care,
Yet never let the noble mind deſpair.
When preſt by dangers, and beſet with foes,
The Gods their timely ſuccour interpoſe;
And when our virtue ſinks, o'erwhelm'd with grief,
By unforeſeen expedients brings relief.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END